# Lisa Felder, Recognized By Influential Women, Inspires Endurance Athletes Through Coaching, Advocacy, And Perseverance



SAN LEANDRO, CA, UNITED STATES, September 22, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- A Nearly Five-Decade Career Has Taken Lisa From Marathon Racing to Ultramarathon Coaching While Expanding Access to the Trail Running Community

San Leandro, California – For nearly five decades, Lisa Felder has made running far more than a personal pursuit. As an ultramarathon coach, endurance athlete, mentor, and advocate for greater inclusion in trail running, she has devoted her career to helping athletes discover what they can achieve. Based in San Leandro, California, Lisa's running journey began in 1977 with 5Ks and 10Ks before eventually leading her to some of the most demanding endurance events in the country.

Her first marathon, completed at the San Francisco Marathon in 1982, became a pivotal moment. The experience opened the door to a deeper commitment to endurance sports and ultimately shaped a career centered on coaching, education, perseverance, and empowerment. Over the years, Lisa expanded her knowledge of biomechanics, terrain strategy, and sports nutrition, developing the expertise needed to guide athletes across increasingly challenging distances.

In 1996, Lisa was invited to help launch the first San Francisco Fit coaching program. That opportunity allowed her to further develop her coaching skills while learning from accomplished athletes and experienced coaches. She subsequently spent years coaching thousands of marathoners through Team in Training, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's renowned

endurance program. Her experience working with athletes of different backgrounds and abilities eventually led her to establish Ultra Fitness Beyond Imagination in 2000.

Through Ultra Fitness Beyond Imagination, Lisa prepares athletes for ultramarathon distances ranging from 50K to 200 miles. Her approach is grounded in education and preparation, reflecting a philosophy shaped by one of the most influential mentors in her life.

Lisa attributes much of her success to a mentor who owned a store in Berkeley and believed in her enough to sponsor her development as a coach. His expectations were demanding. He challenged Lisa to study relentlessly and truly master the craft of coaching, regularly asking her, “What did you learn today? What empowered you today?”

That question became an important part of Lisa’s professional philosophy. Her mentor taught her that becoming a great coach required an understanding of the human body, from tendons, ligaments, and joints to the complexities of sports nutrition. Lisa absorbed his lessons, took detailed notes, and carried that commitment to learning throughout her career.

For Lisa, education remains an ongoing process. She studied sports nutrition at the College of Marin in Kensington, California, and earned Associate of Arts degrees in Human Resources Management/Personnel Administration and Business Administration & Management from Clinton Junior College. Her professional development has continued to complement decades of practical experience in endurance sports.

The career advice Lisa received from her mentor was equally straightforward: never give up and remain strong in whatever she chooses to pursue. His insistence on dedication reinforced the idea that passion alone is not enough. Excellence requires preparation, discipline, education, and the willingness to continue learning.

That philosophy also informs the advice Lisa gives to young women entering the industry. She encourages them to be everything they can be and never let self-doubt define their potential. Her message centers on perseverance and personal responsibility, emphasizing that individuals should continue pursuing their goals even when circumstances become difficult.

Lisa often reminds others, “Tough people last, but tough times don’t.” For her, resilience is not simply an idea reserved for athletic competition. It is a principle that applies to professional development, personal challenges, and the pursuit of long-term goals.

Her commitment to perseverance is closely connected to another important part of her work: making trail running more accessible to Black athletes and other runners who have historically faced barriers to participation.

Lisa recognized that recruiting and retaining Black runners in the trail running community involved challenges extending well beyond athletic ability. Many prospective runners lacked

access to trails, didn't feel welcome in certain spaces, or couldn't afford the substantial costs of competitive trail events. Race entry fees can range from about $100 to $1,600, creating an additional obstacle for athletes who want to participate.

When Lisa brought these concerns to race directors, they encouraged her to seek sponsorship support. She responded by actively pursuing organizations willing to help provide opportunities for underrepresented runners. Her efforts included personally recruiting athletes and helping bring runners to major events such as the Miwok 100K, a demanding race featuring more than 12,000 feet of elevation gain.

For Lisa, creating opportunity means taking practical action. Rather than simply discussing barriers, she has worked to connect athletes with resources that can make participation possible. Her goal is to see similar opportunities expand beyond individual events and reach trail races across the country.

This commitment to inclusion also extends into Lisa's work with Pinkathon, an annual San Francisco running event spanning distances from 5K to 50K. Lisa co-founded and co-directs the event, which raises funds for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. The initiative carries particular personal significance because Lisa experienced breast cancer herself in 2010.

Through Pinkathon, Lisa has connected her passion for running with fundraising, community engagement, and breast cancer awareness. Her involvement reflects her belief that endurance sports can create opportunities not only for physical achievement but also for meaningful causes and collective action.

Her work has earned recognition throughout the endurance community. In 2015, Lisa was inducted into the Black National Marathon Hall of Fame. She is also a member of the Hall of Legends, an honor for athletes who have shown remarkable consistency at prestigious endurance events, including the Skyline 50K and Dick Collins 50 Miler.

In 2023, Lisa's story reached an even wider audience when she was featured in the documentary We Are Distant Runners: The Untold Story of the Americas. She has also participated in public-facing campaigns connected to breast cancer awareness and research, modeling for Kaiser Permanente's breast cancer awareness campaign, the Hope breast cancer research initiative, and a nationally distributed Athleta commercial.

Alongside these achievements, Lisa has continued contributing to charitable and community organizations. Her affiliations include Team in Training as an Ultra Head Coach, Pinkathon as Co-Director and Co-Founder, and the Breast Cancer Research Foundation as a partner and beneficiary organization.

Across all of these roles, four values remain central to Lisa's approach: perseverance, empowerment, continuous learning, and inclusivity.

She believes giving up should never be the answer, whether an athlete is confronting the physical demands of an ultramarathon or an individual is navigating challenges in everyday life. She believes in empowering people to recognize their own capabilities, while also providing the education and support necessary to turn potential into progress.

Lisa's career demonstrates how endurance running can extend beyond competition. For her, coaching is an opportunity to educate. Racing is an opportunity to test personal limits. Advocacy is an opportunity to create access. And community is an opportunity to help others discover that they belong.

After nearly five decades in the running and fitness industry, Lisa continues to coach, compete, mentor, and advocate. Her work reflects a lifetime spent learning from others while creating opportunities for those who follow. Through Ultra Fitness Beyond Imagination, Pinkathon, and her ongoing efforts to increase representation on the trails, Lisa Felder remains committed to a simple but powerful belief: with education, perseverance, and the right support, athletes can push beyond the limits they once believed defined them.

Learn More about Lisa Felder:

Through her Influential Women profile, https://influentialwomen.com/connect/lisa-felder

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